

## Message Text

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13  
ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-07 L-02

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 AID-05

IO-10 OMB-01 /070 W  
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P R 180938Z FEB 75  
FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8413  
INFO AMEMBASSY TOKYO  
CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SEOUL 1030

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PINT KS  
SUBJECT: RELEASE OF POLITICAL PRISONERS

REF A SEOUL 998 B SEOUL 846

SUMMARY: RELEASES OF POLITICAL PRISONERS HAVE ENDED,  
WITH 168 OF 203 HELD UNDER EMERGENCY MEASURES NOW OUT  
OF JAIL. TONG A ILBO HAS CARRIED DETAILED REPORTS OF  
TORTURES ALLEGEDLY SUFFERED BY SOME PRISONERS. GOVERNEMTN  
CAN BE EXPECTED TO CONTINUE TO SEEK WAYS OF MOLLIFYING  
OPPOSITION ELEMENTS. END SUMMARY.

1. ACCORDING TO FEB 18 PRESS REPORTS, RELEASE OF  
PRIOSNERS HELD UNDER EMERGENCY MEASURES 1 AND 4 HAS ENDED.  
OF TOTAL OF 203 PRISONERS ORIGINALLY IN JAIL, 148 WERE  
RELEASED AS RESULT OF PRESIDENT'S FEB 15 ORDER.  
TWENTY HAD BEEN RELEASED EARLIER, INCLUDING FORMER  
PRESIDENT YUN PO-SON AND A NUMBER OF THOSE WHO HAD  
BEEN ILL. REMAINING IN PRISON ARE 23 PERSONS INVOLVED  
IN THE PEOPLE'S REVOLUTIONARY PARTY CASE, 11 WHO HAD  
ALSO BEEN CONVICTED OF VIOLATING THE ANTI-COMMUNIST OR  
STATE SECURITY LAW, AND 1 PERSON WHOSE EMERGENCY MEASURE  
SENTENCE WAS SUSPENDED BUT WHO HAD BEEN CONVICTED OF  
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ANOTHER, UNSPECIFIED, CRIME.

2. TONG A ILBO HAS DEVOTED CONSIDERABLE FRONT PAGE SPACE  
TO ALLEGATIONS OF TORTURES SUFFERED BY SOME IMPRISONED

STUDENTS AS RESULT OF GOVERNMENTS EFFORTS TO MAKE THEM ADMIT COMMUNIST CONNECTIONS. TORTURES DESCRIBED AS "WATER TORTURE", DEPRIVATION OF SLEEP, THREATS OF EXECUTION, "ELECTRIC TORTURE", BEATINGS, HANGING BY THE LEGS. INTERESTINGLY, TONGA ALSO CARRIED STORY OF JOYFUL REUNIONS OUTSIDE PRISONS, COMMENTING THAT PRISONERS LOOKED HEALTHIER THAN EXPECTED. INDEED, PRESS PICTURES OF MAJOR PRISONERS AS WELL AS STUDENTS SHOWED THEM LOOKING IN GOOD SHAPE. NDP LEADER KIM YONG-SAM DECLARED FEB 18 THAT NDP WOULD INVESTIGATE TORTURE CHARGES. OTHER NEWSPAPERS HAVE SO FAR AVOIDED CARRYING TORTURE STORIES.

COMMENT: CHARGES OF TORTURE, WHICH UNDOUBTEDLY EXPECTED BY ROKG, ARE NOT LIKELY TO OUTWEIGH THE OVERALL CONCILIATORY IMPRESSION GIVEN BY THE PRISONER RELEASE. A MORE SERIOUS PROBLEM FOR THE GOVERNMENT WILL BE FUTURE ACTIVITIES OF RELEASED PRISONERS AND WHETHER THEY TRY TO GIVE SHOT IN ARM TO HERETOFORE RATHER FLACCID OPPOSITION. IN THIS REGARD, THERE HAVE BEEN SOME REPORTS THAT RELEASED PERSONS WILL BE CONFINED TO THEIR HOMES, BUT THIS IS NOT YET FULLY CLEAR. IN A MORE POSITIVE VEIN, GOVERNMENT CAN BE EXPECTED TO CONTINUE TO SEEK FURTHER MEANS OF MOLLIFYING OPPOSITION GROUPS AND ENLISTING SUPPORT OF AT LEAST SOME ELEMENTS IN NDP AND AMONG RELIGIOUS GROUPS FOR STEPS TO AVOID CONFRONTATIONS. ON THIS SCORE, WE HAVE ALREADY REPORTED GOVERNMENT FEELERS TO THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHURCHES, (REF B). MORE RECENTLY, DRP HAS SAID THAT CHRISTIAN MEMBERS OF THE PARTY WILL SEEK CONTACTS WITH VARIOUS RELIGIOUS GROUPS, WHILE VICE SPEAKER YI CHOL-SUNG (NDP) MET WITH DRP FLOOR LEADER KIM YONG-TAE IN AN EFFORT TO ESTABLISH AN INTER-PARTY DIALOGUE.

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## Message Attributes

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**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** POLITICAL PRISONERS, PRISONERS RELEASE  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 18 FEB 1975  
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**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** GolinoFR  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
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**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** n/a  
**TAGS:** PINT, KS, (YUN PO-SON)  
**To:** STATE INFO TOKYO  
**CINCPAC**  
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